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The Honorable Trent Lott  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lott:

I am writing to urge that you support the free trade agreement between the United States and the five Central American nations, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, the so-called CAFTA.

CAFTA offers great economic opportunities for the United States. The six nations together are the 12<sup>th</sup> largest export market for the US. It is the second largest export market in Latin America after Mexico. Once CAFTA is in place, U.S. businesses can expect a growing market and increased opportunities.

Just as important as increased trade is the legal framework that CAFTA will set in place. The agreement provides more transparency and public access to information. It also provides anti-corruption measures that will further protect U.S. companies involved in the region.

With respect to telecommunications services particularly, CAFTA establishes an improved legal and regulatory framework. Among other things, it grants non-discriminatory access to public telecommunications services and provides conditions for a competitive market driven telecommunications sector. Beyond the specifics of the agreement are the multiplying effects of an open and robust telecommunications sector that will be the result of CAFTA. Telecommunications is an important facilitator of trade, commerce and economic growth. CAFTA strengthens the telecommunications sector in the region and provides for new opportunities for American companies.

Finally, democracy cannot flourish where there is economic stagnation. It can, however, blossom where there is economic opportunity and growth. CAFTA provides the hope of growth and opportunity and will have a stabilizing impact on the nations of the region. It merits approval by the Congress and I hope that CAFTA will have your support.

Sincerely,



Herschel L. Abbott, Jr.

cc: John McCullouch